



INDUSTRY CIRCULAR

DEPARTMENT OF
THE TREASURY

Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms
Washington, D. C. 20226

Number: 93-10 Date: 1-18-94

RESCISSION OF CERTIFICATES OF ANALYSIS REQUIREMENTS FOR IMPORTED ARGENTINE WINES

Importers, Wholesalers, and Others Concerned:

PURPOSE: The purpose of this industry circular is to notify importers and wholesalers that the existing requirements for certificates of analysis for methanol for wines coming from Argentina are rescinded.

BACKGROUND: In February 1993, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (ATF) received initial information from news sources, which was subsequently confirmed by the United States Embassy in Argentina and by the Argentine Embassy in the United States, that some wines produced in Argentina were found to contain methanol. Deaths and injuries resulted in Argentina from the consumption of the wine containing methanol. Later communiques from the Argentine Government indicated that none of the wine laced with methanol was shipped into the United States. Preliminary testing by the ATF National Laboratory did not detect hazardous levels of methanol.

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) advised ATF that 0.1 percent of methanol by volume in wine was a safe level. Any wine containing methanol in excess of this amount is deemed adulterated pursuant to the Federal Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act, 21 U.S.C. §§ 341(a)(2)(C) and 348.

Consequently, procedures were put in place requiring importers and wholesalers to test any Argentine wines in inventory immediately for the presence of methanol. Importers were advised to test all future shipments of Argentine wines for methanol and to submit copies of the certificates of analysis to ATF's Market Compliance Branch (CO). These procedures were set forth in industry circular (IC) 93-3 dated March 3, 1993, and were to be in place until such time that ATF rescinded the circular.

Further testing by ATF of numerous samples of wine from Argentina, utilizing certificates of analysis submitted by importers, has disclosed that none of these wines contained more than 0.1 percent of methanol.

ACTION: Based on test results, certificates of analysis for methanol for wines coming from Argentina will no longer be required. All instructions and directives requiring certificates of analysis for testing of Argentine wines for methanol are rescinded.

This industry circular supersedes the instructions contained in IC 93-3.

INQUIRIES: Inquiries concerning this industry circular should refer to its number and be directed to the Market Compliance Branch (CO), Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, Washington, DC 20226.

John W. Magaw

Director